

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 /082 W

-----110020 291124Z /23

R 290830Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4630

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MBABANE 1475

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, SHUM, WZ

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: APPROACH TO PRIME MINISTER ON REFUGEE AND
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

REFS: (A) MBABANE 1454 (B) STATE 99624 (C) MBABANE 1432

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING IS REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS SURROUNDING MY
ATTEMPTS TO SEE PRIME MINISTER COLONEL MAPHEVU DLAMINI TO CONVEY
USG CONCERN AND CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS REF B RELATING TO GOS'
RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIONS, ESPECIALLY ON REFUGEE MATTERS.
END SUMMARY.

2. PRIOR TO MY PLANNED ARRIVAL IN MBABANE APRIL 25, EMBASSY HAD
MADE APPOINTMENT FOR ME TO SEE PRIMIN EARLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26,
IN ADVANCE OF CABINET MEETING THAT WAS SCHEDULED TO DECIDE FATE
OF SOWETO STUDENT REFUGEES DETAINED AFTER THEIR STREET DEMON-
STRATION ON APRIL 17. HOWEVER, WE WERE INFORMED EARLY APRIL 26
THAT PRIMIN (WHO ONLY RETURNED HOME THE PREVIOUS DAY AFTER WEEK'S
MEDICAL CHECKUP IN SWITZERLAND HAD CANCELLED ALL
APPOINTMENTS FOR APRIL 26. AT SAME TIME, PRIMIN'S
SECRETARY FIXED EARLY AFTERNOON APPOINTMENT FOR APRIL 27.

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3. SINCE CANCELLATION ELIMINATED POSSIBILITY OF GETTIG IN
TOUCH WITH PRIMIN BEFORE SCHEDULED CABINET MEETING, I SENT HIM
NOTE (REF C) AT OPENING OF BUSINESS APRIL 26 EXPRESSING HOPE GOS
WOULD TAKE NO ACTION WITH RESPECT TO REFUGEE STUDENTS (E.E.,
NOT P.I. THEM) WHICH COULD COMPLICATE EFFORTS TO RESETTLE THEM
OUTSIDE SWAZILAND.

4. WE RECONFIRMED IN WRITING WITH PRIMIN'S SECRETARY OUR APPOINTMENT FOR AFTERNOON APRIL 27. AT LUNCHTIME THAT DAY, CABINET SECRETARY NSIBANDZE CALLED DCM WACHOB TO INQUIRE ABOUT RESON FOR MY APPOINTMENT. NSIBANDZE SAID THAT IF OBJECT OF THE MEETING WAS WHOLLY OR LARGELY REFUGEE MATTERS, I SHOULD SEE DEPUTY PRIMIN, WHO HOLDS REFUGEE PORTFOLIO. NSIBANDZE THEN ADVANCED SERIES OF REASONS WHY PRIMIN WOULD BE UNABLE, IN ANY CASE, TO RECEIVE VISITORS ON APRIL 27 OR 28 OR BEFORE MY SCHEDULED DEPARTURE APRIL 29. WSCHOB REPLIED THAT MEETING COULD BE SHORT BUT THAT FOCUS WOULD MAKE MEETING WITH PRIMIN MORE APPROPRIATE THAN WITH DEPUTY PRIMIN. NSIBANDZE'S SECRETARY CALLED SEVERAL HOURS LATER TO SAY THAT NSIBANDZE WOULD MEET WACHOB AT LATTER'S HOME LATE AFTERNOON TO CONVEY "IMPORTANT MESSAGE" CONCERNING APPOINTMENT.

5. BY DESIGN, I JOINED WACHOB AT HIS HOUSE. NSIBANDZE APPEARED SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY MY PRESENCE; HIS "IMPORTANT MESSAGE" WAS REPETITION OF HIS EARLIER QUESTION ABOUT TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED IN MEETING WITH PRIMIN. I REPLIED TOPICS WOULD INDEED INCLUDE REFUGEE MATTERS BUT ALSO SADAP, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT WHICH PRIMIN WOULD NO DOUBT BE HEARING FROM OTHER GOS OFFICIALS. NSIBANDZE SPOKE OF DESIRABILITY THAT PRIMIN HAVE PRESENT AT MEETING THE MINISTER(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR MATTERS BEING DISCUSSED. (COMMENT: THIS IS NOT RPT NOT STANDARD PRACTICE HERE.) NSIBANDZE SAID THIS COULD MEAN ENTIRE CABINET WOULD BE IN ATTENDANCE.

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I SAID THAT ARRANGEMENTS WERE OF COURSE UP TO PRIMIN, AND THAT I WOULD BE PLEASED TO MAKE MY PRESENTATION TO ENTIRE CABINET IF PRIMIN WISHED.

6. IN DISCUSSION OF TOPICS TO BE RAISED, I SAID USG CONCERN ABOUT GOS TREATMENT OF REFUGEES WAS AMONG THEM. THIS TRIGGERED SHARP RESPONSE BY NSIBANDZE ("SPEAKING PERSONALLY") THAT CABINET WAS "FED UP" WITH OUTSIDE EXPRESSIONS ON THIS ISSUE. PRIMIN HAD ALREADY RECEIVED "STACK OF TELEGRAMS" ON THIS SUBJECT, HE SAID; FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS SEEMED TO BE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE GOS CRACKDOWN ON PAC TO PICK ON SWAZILAND. I REPLIED THAT I WAS CONFIDENT NO TELEGRAM HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM EITHER US EXECUTIVE OR LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ON PAC DETAINEES; THIS WAS ATTRIBUTABLE IN LARGE PART TO THE PRIMIN'S HAVING COMMUNICATED FACTS AND GOS POSITION TO US FOR TRANSMITTAL TO WASHINGTON. THAT WAS THE VERY KIND OF DIALOGUE, I ADDED, THAT ENABLES US TO INFORM GOS IN ADVANCE OF USG CONCERNS THAT MAY BE BREWING AND ENABLES USG, IN TURN, TO OBTAIN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS OF GOS POSITIONS. AFTER SOME FORTY MINUTES' DISCUSSION, NSIBANDZE LEFT WITH PROMISE TO INFORM EMBASSY NEXT MORNING, APRIL 28, OF PRIMIN'S DECISION.

7. MID-MORNING APRIL 28 MESSENGER BROUGHT LETTER FROM NSIBANDZE

CONVEYING

PRIMIN'S "VERY SINCERE APOLOGY THAT DUE TO PRESSING NATIONAL ISSUES (ON WHICH HE HAS HAD TO CONSULT HIS MAJESTY THE KING) HE IS NOT ABLE TO SEE THAT AMBASSADOR EITHER THIS MORNING OR THIS AFTERNOON. THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF ON MONDAY AND, SINCE THE AMBASSADOR HAS OTHER ENGAGEMENTS, THE PRIME MINISTER HOPES VERY MUCH THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE MR. NORLAND BEFORE VERY LONG."

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4631
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINES OMITTED PARA 8)

8. MY RESPONSE WAS TO SEND PRIMIN FOLLOWING LETTER FRIDAY AFTERNOON:

QUOTE THIS BRIEF NOTE IS TO THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR EFFORTS MADE BY YOU PERSONALLY AND YOUR STAFF TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH ME SO SOON AFTER YOUR RETURN FROM ABROAD. I ALSO SHARE YOUR KIND EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT A MUTUALLY CONVEINENT TIME COULD NOT BE FOUND DURING THIS VISIT. I WELCOME AND SHARE YOUR HOPE FOR A RENEWED MEETING BEFORE LONG.

THIS MESSAGE PERMITS ME TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION ONCE AGAIN FOR OUR BRIEF DISCUSSION OF APRIL 14 WHICH, AS WE NOTED TO THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET YESTERDAY, ENABLED US TO RELIEVE ANXIETIES THAT HAD SURFACED IN MY GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS AS A RESULT OF UNINFORMED AND UNFOUNDED RUMORS AND REPORTS. TO ANTICIPATE AND HEAD OFF SIMILAR POTENTIAL ANXIETIES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS,

PARTICULARLY AMONG CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF CONGRESS, I
INTENDED IN PASSING TO MENTION INTEREST IN THE FATE
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OF PERSONS INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE ACTIONS
TAKEN BY YOUR GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PAC.
MEANWHILE, I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE INDICATIONS, CONVEYED
BY MR. NSIBANDZE YESTERDAY, THAT YOU ARE FULLY AWARE
OF THIS HUMANITARIAN CONCERN AND THAT, IN THE MUTUAL
INTEREST OF ALL INVOLVED, NOTHING WILL BE DONE TO MAKE
MORE DIFFICULT THE ONWARD MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES.
IT HAS ALSO BEEN REASSURING TO LEARN THAT YOUR
GOVERNMENT IS FULLY SENSITIVE TO POSSIBLE SERIOUS
ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION WHENEVER REFUGEES ARE RETURNED
TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

THE SUBSTANCE OF MY AGENDA FOR OUR MEETING, HOWEVER, IS
LARGELY DICTATED BY THE BELIEF THAT OUR DIALOGUE CAN
BECOME MORE USEFUL IN PROMOTING POSITIVE COOPERATION.
AS WILL BECOME EVIDENT IN THE COMING DAYS, NEW INITIATIVES
SPONSORED BY THE CONGRESS ARE BEING DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE
CLOSER REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS. I
LOOK FORWARD TO OUR MEETING AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE
THE VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF THIS NEW INITIATIVE AND
WHAT WE HOPE JOINTLY TO ACHIEVE BY IT.

WITH WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS AND RENEWED THANKS. UNQUOTE

9. COMMENT: THIS CHRONOLOGY OMITTS STATEMENTS TO WACHOB
BY PRIMIN'S SECRETARY ON SUCCESSIVE DAYS THAT PRIMIN'S
SCHEDULE COULD EASILY ACCOMMODATE BRIEF CALL BY ME. IT
IS OUTLINED IN DETAIL BECAUSE IT REVEALS UNMISTAKEABLY THAT
PRIMIN SHARES HIS COLLEAGUES' SENSITIVITY ON REFUGEE
SITUATION AND HIS RELUCTANCE TO DISCUSS SITUATION, AT
LEAST NOT WITHOUT MINISTERIAL WITNESS, FOR FEAR OF
BEING QUOTED TO CABINET COLLEAGUES AS NOT TAKING TOUGH
ENOUGH LINE WITH "OUTSIDE MEDDLERS." IT ALSO
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REVEALS CLEARLY THE GOS REACTION TO MEREST SUGGESTION OF
CRITICISM OR HINT THAT THEY HAVE ERRED, WHICH
IS TO TURN INWARD AND TRY TO IGNORE THE PROBLEM.
OUR TASK IS IN LARGE MEASURE ONE OF GETTING A
DIALOGUE GOING, SO WE CAN TALK PRIVATELY ABOUT
MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST IN FRANK AND FRIENDLY WAY.
WE ARE STILL A LONG WAY FROM THAT POINT. END COMMENT.

10. AS NOTED PARA 8, I WILL SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH PRIMIN
DURING MY NEXT VISIT TO MBABANE DURING BUDGET DISCUSSIONS
AT OSARAC SCHEDULED MAY 15-16.
NORLAND

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